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the Inside Scoop...of OJJ

Mission:

The Office of Juvenile Justice protects the public by providing safe and effective individualized services to youth, who will become productive, law-abiding citizens.



Dr. Mary L. Livers, Deputy Secretary

The holiday season is upon us – how this year has flown by. Seems it wasn't that long ago that I was wishing everybody a happy new year, and that time is rolling around again.

It's been a busy year and we have seen a lot of changes and faced a lot of challenges. As ever, we met the challenges head on and worked through the changes to best meet the mission. When you have a team as good as OJJ's it all works out.

Christmas is right around the corner and I hope you all have your shopping, decorating and tree trimming under control. Whether you shop ahead or wait til Christmas Eve, it's still fun to choose just the right gift for the special people in our lives. Although this is a busy time of year, it's a fun kind of busy, with lots of gatherings and get-togethers and food, food, food.

As you read through the pages of this issue of *The Inside Scoop...of OJJ*, you will notice that staff in every OJJ office get together as family to share holidays and events, and to support one another and the families we serve, and complete strangers in need. What a privilege it is to serve with such a giving staff.

Here's my wish for each and every member of the OJJ family, and your own dear ones, to enjoy a happy and peaceful Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and holiday season, and a wonderful, safe New Year. See you in 2010.

"Doc" Dr. Mary L. Livers



Soul Food

An inspirational column by OJJ staff



Swanson Chaplain Ricky

L. James

The Real Meaning of Christmas: WHY DID THE CREATOR SEND HIS SON INTO THE WORLD?

I hope everyone had a very happy Thanksgiving Day, and you are looking forward to a Merry Christmas and a Happier New Year.

Christmas is the Christian celebration of the birth of Jesus, the Son of The Creator. Without this event we would not celebrate this holiday.

"Why did the Creator send His Son into the World?" is a question that has been asked many times. The personality, St. John, an apostle of Jesus, wrote to reveal to us the motive that guided him in the selection of both the events and words of Jesus, as he writes his account of the Gospel.

John said that although many signs and wonders that Jesus performed are not written in Scripture, written is enough to for believers that Jesus is the Son of God.

John reveals the primary purpose that the Creator sent his Son into the world. John says "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but shall have everlasting life; that the world through Him might be saved."

I am purposing that the Creator sent Jesus into the world for at least three reasons.

First, to reveal that His love is all inclusive. God's love is for everybody, and He does loves everybody. John wrote, "For God so loved *the world...*" That includes everybody, everywhere. It does not matter who you are, or what you are. He loves you! Some of old thought that He only loved the chosen people of Israel. But Jesus came to reveal that both Jews and Gentiles (that's us) were included.

Secondly, the Creator sent Jesus into the world to save mankind from perishing. That's what Christmas is all about: God sending His only begotten Son into the world to save us from our sins. And by coming into the world, Jesus revealed life as a qualitative experience spent in service to The Father and to others, as it was meant to be.

Third, Jesus came into the world to provide a way of salvation. The Father knew that mankind needed a way to be rescued, redeemed, delivered and saved. So He made a simple way, that even a child can understand. Christians believe that to experience salvation, we believe with all our heart that Jesus is the Son, and that he is the Creator's only begotten Son. For Scripture says "for God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

Remember the reason for Christmas, "why God sent His Son into the world" this Christmas.

Humbly submitted,
Rev. Ricky L. James

THE DAILY MOTIVATOR**Happy New Year**

2010 is almost here. What will it bring?

Opportunity. Every day of the coming year will be filled with opportunity and possibilities. Every day will give you a chance to make your life count, to make a difference, to grow, to learn, to achieve, to be the person you were meant to be.

Today you stand at the threshold of a new year. A blank slate ready to be filled by you. The new year makes no promises, and has no guarantees other than this -- every day will be filled with challenges and opportunities. It is up to you to recognize the opportunities, to see the possibilities, and to overcome the challenges. And by so doing, your life, and the world around you, will be enriched.

You don't have to wish for a Happy New Year. You have the power to make it a truly happy year, a year of fulfillment and accomplishment for you. A year that will lead to many other great years.

It doesn't seem that long ago that we ushered in 2000, and 2010 is already looming on the horizon. Time is precious, and we cannot save it up. We must use it as it comes.

Climb aboard 2010 and hold on. Keep your eyes open -- there's opportunity around every bend. Have fun. It's going to be a great ride!

-- Ralph Marston

TRANSITIONS

Comings and Goings.....welcome to new members of the OJJ family:

BRIDGE CITY

Opal Joseph, Social Worker 1

MONROE

Gregory Colvin, Probation/Parole Officer 1

SWANSON

**Antonio Brown, Corrections Cadet
Womble Jackson, Corrections Cadet
Jeffery Trichell, Corrections Cadet
Christopher Weaver, Maint. Repairer 2
Demarcus White, Corrections Cadet**

Retired:

Angela Johnson, Social Worker 5-B, retired from Bridge City with 28 years of service.

CQIS POLICY UPDATES

A.1.1 - Policy Correspondence and Distribution

A.2.5 - Family and Medical Leave of Absence

A.2.16 - Tobacco Free and No Smoking Policy

A.5.6 - Internet and E-mail Usage

C.4.1 - Furlough Process and Escorted Absence

C.6.1 - Food Services

Keeping Abreast of Pertinent Research

by PPS Steve Neef, Lafayette OJJ

The *Desktop Guide to Good Juvenile Probation Practice* published by the National Center for Juvenile Justice (Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention) states that “probation officers and their departments have an obligation to keep abreast of research that affects their work.” And it adds, “Juvenile probation should be an optimistic profession, focused on the practical rehabilitation of young people.” (*Introduction: Rethinking Juvenile Probation*, pp. 2-3)

These statements from the U.S. Department of Justice strongly confirm our OJJ *Mission* statement which calls us to “protect the public by providing safe and effective individualized services to youth, who will become productive, law-abiding citizens.” The statements also echo our *Vision* which states we are “a quality system of care which embraces partnerships with families, communities, and stakeholders to assist youth in redirecting their lives toward responsible citizenship.”

Thus our ultimate aim is *public safety through the practical rehabilitation of juveniles by helping them to redirect their lives toward being responsible, productive, law-abiding citizens*. Everything we do should contribute towards accomplishing that mission. If something is not helping us to reach that goal then we should discontinue it; and if it is helpful then we need to continue it (or apply more of it). In other words, we are interested in “outcome-based” approaches and services.

I would like to address two important factors related to our work here at OJJ which may help us to improve or refine our approach to attaining our Mission and Vision statements. It is based on “research that affects our work” as it directly affects the quality of life for many of our clients and their families. And I think my experience and observation over the past

20-plus years of working with this agency have indeed confirmed the authenticity of these studies. And I’m sure many of you can say the same.

In his fine book *Making Peace with Your Father* David Stoop, Ph.D., clinical director of Minirth-Meir-Stoop Clinic, a psychiatric program in southern California writes, “Whether your memories are positive or negative, whether your father was present or absent, he has shaped and continues to shape who you are today. Every year many clients come to our office for counseling about a variety of issues. Often we find that these clients need to discuss and resolve some very painful father issues before we can deal with what appears to be the ‘real’ problem. As we shall see in this book, fathers play a crucial role in child development.” (p. 4) The cover of the book even states, “When you were little [your father] was the most important man in your life. Now that you’re grown up, he still affects everything you are and do – sometimes in ways you don’t suspect.”

In today’s society with the staggering number of children growing up in fatherless and broken homes (or where one’s father was physically present but emotionally absent) it is not surprising that so many young people are struggling deep down with painful emotions and issues regarding their fathers. Judith Wallerstein is widely considered the foremost authority regarding the adverse effects (on children) of broken homes and single-parent households. In her work she cites multiple studies indicating the increased psychological, social, and educational problems and failures associated with these children. Stephen Baskerville, a professor at Howard University says his research indicates that *fatherlessness far surpasses poverty and other noted factors as a predictor of social deviance*.

Two of our providers in the St. Mary Parish community, a male counselor and his female co-worker, offer a “Ministry of Reconciliation” to our clients and their parents, as they are convinced that one of the

main obstacles to effective rehabilitation among our youth today is the need to deal with the deep-seated anger and bitterness that many of them have towards their absent parent (usually their father). These two counselors are so dedicated to their cause that some aspects of their services are free of charge and are administered during their free time.

In our work with troubled youth and witnessing the high recidivism rates of delinquency and status offenses, we would all do well to learn more about this crucial issue that affects so many of our clients and their families (and perhaps even our own lives and children). Our service providers in the communities and our social workers at the facilities and institutions are in such an important position to make a real difference in the lives of these young people. We need to appreciate their positions and commend them on their admirable efforts. Yet all of us can contribute to the process to some degree.

Another very important aspect of our work which perhaps goes unnoticed at times is the commendable efforts of our chaplains and their staff at the juvenile institutions (not to mention the various church ministries that reach out to our youth while they are in detention centers and shelters). I am so pleased that the lively *"Soul Food"* column has a prominent place in each issue of our agency's newsletter, so we can hear from these important ministers of reconciliation who seek to bring spiritual health to our juveniles and the rest of us.

Several years ago, in the summer of 2005 (not long after the passing of the Juvenile Reform Act), Dr. Kristen Parsons Winokur spoke at our Providers Meeting here at Lafayette OJJ. As Research Director of the Juvenile Justice Research Center in Tallahassee, Florida, Dr. Winokur was familiar with many of the encouraging studies on juvenile justice and delinquency prevention. She related to me after the meeting that the *faith-based* program approach in Florida is probably the most

impressive and promising type of intervention affecting rehabilitation and recidivism as demonstrated by many reputable studies. Of course, Dr. Winokur was aware of the well-known 2003 study of Prison Fellowship's InnerChange Freedom Initiative (a faith-based program) by the University of Pennsylvania in the Texas prisons which indicated significant reduction in recidivism rates among inmate attendants compared to similar control groups.

A while back *The Wall Street Journal* noted that more than 500 such studies have indicated that the faith factor "often makes faith-based programs more effective than their purely secular counterparts." As Chuck Colson has reported in his Prison Fellowship newsletter, "Noted social scientist John Dilulio says it is now 'intellectually irresponsible' to ignore the 'faith factor' when tackling social problems."

One scholarly yet practical book I would recommend to co-workers in this field is entitled *Effective Jail & Prison Ministry for the 21st Century*, co-edited by Dr. W. Thomas Beckner and Jeff Park. Its contributors include many highly educated and very experienced leaders in the field of criminal justice. The book contains a good history of the penal system and the reform movement, and various aspects of correctional ministry such as restorative justice, aftercare, addictions, the use of literature and so forth. There is also a section that addresses the juvenile system in particular, written by Dr. Scott Larson, founder and director of *Straight Ahead Ministries*, which offers faith-based intervention to juvenile delinquents and oversees a mentoring and aftercare program for youth released from detention centers.

Steve Neef is a Probation & Parole Supervisor at Lafayette OJJ. He has been with OJJ since 1989, and was previously employed with the Office of Family Services (the Welfare Department) and the Refugee Resettlement Program. He holds a Master's Degree in Pastoral Studies from Loyola University in New Orleans.

Staff Spotlight

Spotlight on...

... Janet Pierce, Probation and Parole Officer 1 Tallulah Regional Office

“Janet Pierce was a 26-year veteran with the Office of Community Services, and she transferred to OJJ in October 2008,” said **Regional Manager Ruth Stephens**. “Due to certain circumstances, she was dismissed from her first attempt in the POST Academy. Janet paid her own expenses for a second chance at the POST Academy. She graduated November 13, 2009 at the top of her class including second in academics. With such a display of tenaciousness, will she make a great OJJ Officer? You bet! Tallulah OJJ is honored to have her on its team.”

Janet had always wanted to be a Probation and Parole Officer, but she had relatives who were already on the OJJ staff and she could not serve in that office. When her opportunity finally arrived, Janet took the plunge after 26 years with OCS and changed careers at age 50. After leaving a tenured job, going back on probation and finally achieving the position her heart desired, there was no way that Janet was going to let the opportunity go. She did what she had to do to be successful: she paid her own way at the Bossier City POST Academy, rented an apartment and left her family at home in Tallulah for 12 weeks. And she passed with flying colors. “I have a great husband and a wonderful little boy,” Janet added, “I couldn’t have done it without their support.”

“I’m well satisfied with where I am now,” Janet said. “I plan to stay for a long while. This is my calling. This is where I need to be.” And she added with a chuckle, “I have a seven-year old son to put through college.”

Janet started out at DSS in the food stamp office, spent 13 years in support enforcement

and another 13 years in social services dealing with child abuse cases. “You see terrible cases of abuse,” she said, “and I saw too many fatalities. I felt that I could not make a difference there. After a while, the stress level gets to you. I needed to make a move. I wanted to make a difference and I felt that I could do that as a probation officer.” Janet said that social services counselors work many extra hours and she needed more time with her family. When the opportunity arose, she was ready for it.

“A lot of people don’t want to hire someone who is older,” Janet continued. “I knew if I didn’t make it through the POST Academy I would be dismissed. There are not a lot of good jobs in this area except for professionals and state positions. You have to make sacrifices in life to achieve your goals.”

“This is a great group to work with,” Janet said of the Tallulah OJJ staff. “They take care of things for one another. Everyone pulls together and the working atmosphere is great. You can ask a supervisor or Miss Ruth for guidance and they are always helpful. The staff works well together. I am very appreciative of all the other PPOS and the clerical staff. They put family first. And I want to thank the OJJ leadership staff who gave me this chance.”

“A lot of the programs that OJJ is putting into place are really making a difference,” Janet stated. “Kids are getting the services they need in both secure or non-secure facilities. Many kids are getting their GEDs and they are being taught social skills. They are being taught a different life from street life. It doesn’t matter if kids are from a small town or from a large city, they have the same mentality that it takes to survive. I am seeing kids turn the corner in OJJ care.”

“Of course there are some kids for whom life has no meaning and who just don’t care,” Janet observed. “So you still have to stay on the side of law enforcement.”

Janet's primary focus is her family. "My husband, Calvin, is my best friend," she noted, "and we were elated when our son Clay was born. We were truly thrilled to have him. I love to spend time with my son – he is my reason for being."

Before they became parents, Janet and Calvin, who farms cattle, spent a lot of weekends at rodeos where he competed as a roper. When Clay was born, Calvin took primary care of him so that Janet could work. "He took our son everywhere with him – they rode the tractor together and baled hay together. And I get to sit back and think of how blessed we are."

Janet holds two degrees from Northeast Louisiana University, now ULM, an associate degree in aviation and a bachelor's degree in home economics and family relations, and has a number of graduate hours.

"This is what I want," Janet says of her position as a probation and parole officer. "It's been good, and I still have a lot to learn. When I think of life in general, I feel so blessed, in things large and small."

Speaking with Janet just confirms RM Ruth Stephens' assessment that Janet Pierce is going to be one great PPO for OJJ.

Alexandria Regional Office

Congratulations

PPO Robert Harris graduated from the Alexandria Police Academy in November. We are very proud of him, as he received the "Brian K. Coleman Memorial" Iron Will to Survive Award.

PPO1 Heath Wallace is a proud father once again. He and his wife welcomed a healthy baby boy, **Conley Wayne Wallace**, on November 5.

OJJ staff celebrated Thanksgiving November 24th. We all enjoyed the delicious turkey and pork roast prepared by **Clay Dupuy**.

Geneva Burrell with "Destiny Now" took five of our probation girls to Oklahoma for the Girls Empowerment Conference. The trip was a success, the girls learned a lot about themselves and how they may grow up to be strong "empowered" women for the future.

PPO 2 Lori Johnson, PPO2 Jency Moore, and PPO3 Donna Desoto participated in the Veterans Day activities held at the Veterans Administration Hospital along with CLMI (Central Louisiana Marine Institute) and CSI youth. They handed out OJJ water bottles, coffee cups, and candy. Our **Transport Officer Vernell Jewell**, rode his motorcycle in the parade as well.

Baton Rouge Regional Office

Congratulations

PPO2 Elois Nelson was the **November Employee of the Month**.

Farewell!

Baton Rouge OJJ said goodbye to **PPO Micah James**.

Baton Rouge OJJ celebrated Thanksgiving by preparing Turkey Day Packages for a few of our needy families. The packages included a 15 -17 lb turkey, stove top stuffing, potatoes, jambalaya mix, dirty rice mix, corn bread, sweet peas, yams, green beans, cake mixes, frosting, pie crusts and pie fillings.

It is our hope that we were able to help make Thanksgiving a scrumptious day for some of our OJJ families.



Baton Rouge OJJ's Turkey Day Packages for needy OJJ client families.

Back at the office, we celebrated our Thanksgiving Day with our traditional pot luck lunch.

Everyone brought all kinds of goodies, appetizers, vegetables, side dishes and meats. We dined together as one family enjoying each other's company while filling our bellies with all of the day's delights.



PPO Micah James celebrates Thanksgiving.



Enjoying the Thanksgiving celebration are PPO Darla Hood, PPO Wendy Sarner, PPO Myron Theriot, PPO Leslie Jones, PPO Larry Aaron and Transportation Officer Paul Kopan.

Bridge City Center for Youth

Condolences

The Bridge City family asks our OJJ family to please remember **Staff Development Coordinator Julie LaRose** in your thoughts and prayers. Mrs. LaRose's husband, **Alan** passed away December 7. We offer heartfelt condolences to Julie on her loss.

BCCY Celebrates Thanksgiving with a Program and Meal

Thinking about being thankful, and we have so much to be thankful for, were the themes that prevailed at BCCY'S annual Thanksgiving Program. It was coordinated by the Education Department and supported by the administrative, cafeteria, laundry, LSU, Social Services, and Recreational Departments.

The program commenced with a blessing over the meal by **Westley P.**, followed by a PowerPoint presentation by **Kenneth R.** and a military style color guard presentation by **Joseph G., Zachary H., Glenn C.** and **Joshua R.**

The youth enjoyed an appetizing Thanksgiving meal with all the trimmings and specialty desserts prepared by students in the culinary arts program.



Colorful Thanksgiving treats prepared by our youth.

One of the highlights of the program to be noted was the overwhelming effort and

participation by youth themselves. Trayvis J. served proudly as the Master of Service, Galen L. greeted his audience with a welcome and Isaiah P. and Joseph D. retold a historical account of the first Thanksgiving story.

Additionally, all dorms (Liberty, Serenity, Faith, Justice, Dignity, Destiny, Pride, Perseverance, Harmony, and Hope) provided representation by sharing what they have to be thankful for in their lives. The students poured out their heartfelt thoughts through journal entries, acrostics and poetic spoken words. It was truly a delight to witness the sense of gratitude displayed by our youth.

Throughout the program, the youth and staff were informed and entertained by our special guest. Former youth Chad K. shared his insights on life after BCCY and we learned about the importance of collegiate life in the academic realm and service organizations from members of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. Theta Mu Chapter-UNO.

We were also visited by a Mardi Gras Indian who talked about the significance of Indians in our culture. Our program culminated with inspiring performances by a dance group from the City of Love Church and a musical celebration from a local guest vocalist.

Truly, we all have so much to be thankful for and we should think about being thankful at all times.



The Thanksgiving display by our youth.

The BCCY Family steps up to help those less fortunate than ourselves...



Dear Colleagues,

In these tough economic times, more than ever, poor and working families are depending upon the kindness of strangers for basic necessities of life. To that end, I am on the board of directors for the **Good Samaritan Services**, an organization that helps poor and needy families cope with everyday struggles.

Currently, our food supply has been severely diminished due to funding reductions to Second Harvest. The need, however, for these services has not diminished. There are more families than ever that need our help.

I am asking that Bridge City Center for Youth employees and friends answer the call by **donating food items** needed to restock our food bank. Form this community partnership by participating in our very own food drive.

Thanks for your help.

Sincerely,

Dorean Phoenix,

Good Samaritan Services Board of Directors
BCCY Riverside Alternative School Principal

Sunday Services With Cornerstone Christian Center

On December 6 **Cornerstone Christian Center** was very happy to welcome a group of young men from BCCY to its services. The weekly teachings of **Mavis McCall** and **Ed Toves** at BCCY have made such a difference that **Deputy Director Gaines** wanted Bruce J., Tyrone S., and Alex C., to attend the Sunday service. Everyone was welcomed with open arms.

Central Office

Condolences

Our heartfelt condolences to **Program Manager Angela Bridgewater** on the loss of her father, and to **Procurement Specialist Nona Holmes (Tucker)** on the loss of her mother. Please keep Angela, Nona, and their families in your thoughts and prayers.

Congratulations

HR Supervisor Amanda Lewis and **Eric Smith** celebrated their nuptials in November.

United Way Campaign is a Huge Success

Central Office, joined by three regional offices, wrapped up a successful United Way Fund Drive. **Deputy Undersecretary Paula Roddy** led the United Way campaign and reports that we have more than doubled the amount raised in 2008. The **Monroe, Lake Charles and Hammond Regional Offices** participated in the United Way campaign this year. **Administrative Assistant Peggy Guerin** reports that we raised at total of \$11,742 from payroll deductions, one-time gifts and activities. Dr. Livers thanked everyone for their generosity.

The breakdown of funds raised follows:

Three Regional Offices: payroll deductions and one-time gifts: **\$3,562**

Central Office: \$8,180

- payroll deductions and one-time gifts: \$7,041
- bake sale: \$401
- Country Store: \$666
- Raffle: gift certificate for a massage, donated by **Paula Roddy**: \$72

Total for OJJ: \$11,742.16

Country Store was a Fun and Successful Event

Adm. Assistant Peggy Guerin, assisted by **Dr. Livers' secretary Nita Franklin-Shanklin**, **Adm. Assistant Marvel Adams** and **student worker Brittany Bricker**, worked tirelessly to solicit items for a Country Store event, just in time for Christmas. Central office staff cleaned closets and bookshelves to donate a roomful of good stuff. We were joined by lots of staff from State Police who enjoyed shopping with us. Merchandise was arranged by set price, while a silent auction was conducted for "big ticket items." Many thanks to Peggy, Nita, Marvel and Brittany for their efforts.



Peggy Guerin



A sad tiger became a glad tiger when it found a new home.



Books were hot sellers at the Country Store.



Staff browsing through the Country Store fundraiser event for United Way.

CO Says Goodbye to Hollywood

No, not *that* Hollywood!

Our orderly, Hollywood Richardson, has taken care of CO staff since we moved into State Police Headquarters four years ago. He recently was released after a number of years of incarceration.

In a letter to Hollywood, Dr. Livers spoke for all us at central office when she said: "Hollywood, you have taken care of all of us, gotten to know us, spoiled all of us and gone many extra miles to make us comfortable. We want to extend our sincere thanks to you



for your loyal, dependable service. Thanks on behalf of the people you moved ten times as we got settled in, and then moved again to offices all over the first floor.

Thanks for your patience when we were painting - you moved us out, and in, and out, and in, until every office was finally painted. Thanks for the gazillions of pictures you hung for us. Thanks for the 6,322 times you emptied our overfull trash cans and paper shredders. Thanks for finding desks, chairs and equipment we didn't even know we had. Thanks for all the repairs you made to our furniture so we wouldn't have to sit on chairs with three legs. A huge thanks for helping us to pass the ACA accreditation. Thanks for doing every crazy little thing we asked of you, and we asked a lot.

We want to wish you well as you go forth into the next chapter of your life. We want you to know that we support you, and we are confident that you are going to do well. "

Thanks to generous donations from staff and others, we were able to present Hollywood with \$1160.00 to help him on his way.

National Pageant Winner in the OJJ Family

Jamie Johnell Roddy, daughter of **Deputy Undersecretary Paula Merrick-Roddy** and her husband **James Roddy**, won the National All American Miss Queen's title at the National American Miss Pageant in November, in Anaheim, CA. Jamie competed against contestants from across the country. In addition to the queen's title, she won the National Actress competition, placed as first runner-up in Most Spirit, second runner-up in the Top Model Fashion Shoot, second runner-up in Most Promising Model, and fourth runner-up in Spokesmodel. She received the queen's prize package of trophies, crowns, banners and sponsorship awards. Jamie is 20 years old and a junior at ULL.



Hammond Regional Office

Congratulations

The **Hammond OJJ Superstar** this month was **PPO3 Christy Ford**. She was nominated by **PPO2 Danielle August** for meeting with a parent to pick up a youth's clothing for non secure placement.

Promotions

PPOs Renee Barrois and **Kristin Rainey** were promoted to PPO2/J.

SSC4 Lori Wagner graduated from La MOD training in November. Lori attended La

MOD training for three weeks at Bridge City Center for Youth. We're glad she's back!



Hammond OJJ office held its Thanksgiving Potluck on November 17th. Each employee brought in a dish and we all enjoyed lunch together.



Pictured from left to right: PPO3 Dana May, AC4 Courtney Pegues, PPO2 Danielle August, PPO1 Jennifer Sirchia, PPO3 Kasey Wall, PPO3 Mark Benton, PPO3 Kevin Kulivan, PPO3 Christy Ford.

Jetson Center for Youth

Rising Stars Choir Continues to Shine

By Master Sergeant Frances Bailey

The **Jetson Rising Stars Choir** celebrated Veterans Day in Baker at the annual celebration honoring veterans. The youth paid tribute to the veterans by singing patriotic songs, visiting and sharing punch and cake with them. Eight youth attended along with **Director Daron Brown, Major Joann King, Adm. 4 Rosena AbdulAziz, Program Manager Belinda Thomas, Major James Spears** and **M/Sgt. Kelly Johnson**. We really enjoyed the touching stories that the veterans told the youth.

The **Rising Stars** performed for the Association of Women Executives in Corrections (AWEC) Convention in New

Orleans in November. The choir did an outstanding job and once again had the crowd on their feet. Unfortunately, our musician **Ben Groover, LSUHSC Social Worker**, was not able to attend, so we had to make other arrangements. **Youth J. Neal** and **Counselor Dexter James** played bass guitars and **Counselor Micon Gaines** played the keyboard. Hats off to these guys - they had to learn the songs the day before the event.

The day was full of surprises. Get this one - as the choir sang their rendition of "I Believe I Can Fly," **Dr. Livers** came out from nowhere and began to direct the choir. Doc was really feeling it. We can use her for future events.



Guest Conductor Dr. Mary Livers accepts kudos for the virtuoso performance.

The choir's road trips also included a performance for the annual holiday luncheon meeting of the Louisiana Chapter of the National Institute of Government Purchasing, Inc. at the LSU Faculty Club.

Youth Receive Industry Certification in Vocational Education

Four students at Jetson's Scenic Alternative High School were recently certified in the C-Tech class for Telecommunication and Copper-based wiring. "This is a great group of young men. We are so proud of them," said **Ronnie Knox, Principal** of Scenic Alternative High School. Mr. Knox also said once the youth receive their final certification in handling fiber optic cable, they will have

three certifications, the first for Scenic Alternative High School.

The C-Tech Fiber Optics and Telecommunications curriculum provides students with the knowledge and skills needed to become certified entry-level technicians in the network cabling and telecommunications industry.

The course focuses on proper tool use and construction techniques, characteristics of industry standards, troubleshooting and repair. Students also learn the basics of cable termination, testing and troubleshooting of fiber optic and copper wiring networks. C-Tech provides students with the fundamental background knowledge in theory, media of transmission, topologies and functions of systems used in businesses and homes worldwide. Students construct, test, and troubleshoot copper-based and fiber optic cabling systems that are the basis of today's networking, cable television and satellite communications systems. The industry standards include both commercial and residential structures, copper-based systems, wired and wireless networks.



Pictured from left are David F., Jordan H., Shawn Kissick, C-Tech Instructor, Stanley W., Brandon W. and Samuel Butler, C-Tech Assistant Instructor.

Lafayette/Opelousas Regional Office

Congratulations

Administrative Coordinator Alina Perro was selected as the October **Employee of the Month**.

Community Outreach Activities

Iberia Parish **PPOs Cassandra Gardiner** and **Rosanna Langner** gave a career-oriented presentation at Westgate High School in November, focused on the requirements and qualifications of the job of a Probation & Parole Officer, as well as the different aspects of the job. They fielded questions from students interested in the criminal justice field, and gave them valuable information that will guide them once they enter college.

Lafayette/Opelousas OJJ hosted a luncheon in November for the region's judges, district attorneys, assistant district attorneys, and service providers, at Acadian Village in Scott. Lafayette **PPO Roy Brown**, who does a great deal of volunteer work through Acadian Village, assisted in reserving the dining room. The main course was chicken and sausage gumbo, prepared by Iberia Parish **Supervisor Joey Denais** and Evangeline Parish **PPO Chris Leblanc**. Officers prepared side dishes, arranged the room, served the guests, and cleaned up. Representatives from Gulf Coast Family Teaching Services, Volunteers of America and Cadence gave presentations on the services that their organizations offer. The officers, judges, attorneys, and providers had a fantastic afternoon, and several of the judges commented that they enjoyed conversing with their probation officers outside of the formality of the courtroom.

We held our Thanksgiving lunch on November 20. Iberia Parish **Supervisor/Chef Joey Denais** prepared a fried turkey, and the other officers brought side dishes, soft drinks, and desserts to enjoy.

Staff Goes the Extra Mile (literally)

In an example of the officers of Lafayette/Opelousas OJJ coming together, donations were collected to purchase a senior ring for **Ebony B.**, a client under supervision of Vermilion Parish **PPO Rhonda Gallet**. Ebony was adjudicated FINS for truancy. Ebony, now a senior at Kaplan High School, was discouraged because classmates were excited about picking out their senior rings, while her family could not afford to purchase one. **Social Worker Maria Menard** and St. Martin Parish **Supervisor Robert Guirard**, both avid runners, signed up to run the annual Cajun Cup 5K Race in November, and they collected pledges from members of the staff, based on how many miles they would complete in the race. Both finished the race, and over \$300 was collected to purchase a ring for Ebony. According to PPO Gallet, Ebony was overjoyed, and even cried, when she learned that she would have a ring like the rest of her classmates, to commemorate her hard work and effort.

And, finally an OJJ success story...

Youth **Trenton H.** was adjudicated delinquent in 2005 on some very serious charges and spent two years in non-secure custody, with then-Placement PPO, now **Supervisor Steve Neef** handling the case. The youth greatly benefited from the services offered, but found difficulty entering the public school system due to the severity of his charges. St. Mary Parish **PPO Karla Meranto** assisted the youth in hearings with the school board, which kept him out of school for nearly a year.

Upon being allowed to re-enter Morgan City High School in 2007, Trenton found himself behind the rest of his class. He put his nose to the grindstone and made up his missed credits. The youth is now a senior and will graduate on time. He has perfect attendance, a clean discipline record, and a 2.5 GPA. It's a fantastic accomplishment, and it shows the difference that the services offered by OJJ, as

well as the work of two dedicated PPOs, can make in a youth's life.

Lake Charles Regional Office

Congratulations

PPO1 Hollie Comeaux graduated from the POST Academy in November.

PPO1 Garrick Chambers and his new wife **Jonn** were married on December 5.

PPO3 Fred Fontenot celebrated 12 years with OJJ in November.

In November Lake Charles OJJ congratulated two local OJJ youth who earned their GEDs: **Amber B.** and **Charlie B.**, in the caseloads of **PPO3 Karli Pullard** and **PPO3/J Delisa Clark** respectively.

Thanks go out to...

Program Specialist Jacqueline Page for conducting the CPR/First Aid Training in November. The following people participated: **Karli Pullard, Melissa Cross, Monet Newman, Delisa Clark, Angie Stevens, Rebecca Harmon, Ken Vidrine, Fred Fontenot, Jeff Haley, & Ronald Gilchrist..**

Staff Volunteer for Community Service

PPS Ken Vidrine sought volunteer opportunities for our office to donate our services at Abraham's Tent by serving food to the needy on Thanksgiving. For a holiday designated to give thanks, this would be an opportunity to be truly grateful for the blessings we have. However, they requested monetary support instead.

PPO3 Monet Newman volunteered to seek two "angels" from a community Christmas tree for the office to sponsor at Christmas. Thanks also to **Monet** for generosity shown with S.L., a female youth.

The child expressed a need for some more clothes, as she had outgrown the ones she was wearing when admitted into detention. PPO Newman purchased this child a jogging suit, undergarments, socks, stationery and envelopes.

Social Worker Janice Manuel continued to advocate for SPICY Walk for Teen Suicide prevention. She represented Lake Charles OJJ office and raised money to help prevent teen suicide in our area. The fundraiser was held on a cold and rainy Saturday morning, but Janice's dedication persisted! Thank you, Janice, for your service to the community!

PPO2 Garrick Chambers, PPO3 Fred Fontenot, and **PPO3 Ronald Gilchrist** continue to play basketball with Boys Village youth.

PPO2/J Rebecca Harmon and Social Worker Janice Manuel offered a Stop Bullying Now presentation at Oak Park Elementary in October (in the pouring rain). They did a great job!

Thank you to **PPO3 Karli Pullard** for generosity shown with A.B., a female youth. The officer assisted her in obtaining college prep books, enrolling in school and obtaining a photo ID.

GREAT JOB goes to **PPO3 Alexis Heflin** for seeking opportunities for kids in Beauregard Parish. Alexis has spoken to the West Humane Society, which agreed to allow our probationers to care for the animals for community service hours. Further, Alexis did more recruiting and the Grace Church is also interested in working with our kids to fulfill community service obligations. Finally, the St. Vincent DePaul Thrift Store (nationwide thrift store) is a third community program that Alexis has been in contact with to provide community service opportunities for our children. We are so impressed with Alexis!

Thank you to **PPO3 Delisa Clark** for generosity shown with J.Q., a male youth.

The officer assisted him in obtaining a photo ID.

Thank you to **PPO3 Ronald Gilchrist** for generosity shown with L.S., a male youth. The officer transported the youth from the St. James Detention Center to the Avoyelles Parish jail so that he and his mother could visit for a few hours. The two had not seen one another in quite some time.

Thanks for Extraordinary Thanksgiving Giving

PPO3 Fred Fontenot treated one of his probationers to a Thanksgiving lunch at a local restaurant, as the child does not have family to celebrate the holidays with.

PPO3 Delisa Clark demonstrated great generosity by providing Thanksgiving food staples to one of her probationers' family who is struggling financially. They were so grateful.

Monroe Regional Office

Welcome

Monroe OJJ welcomes new **Probation Officer Gregory Colvin**. Welcome to the family.

Congratulations

Willie Hunter was recently promoted to PPO 3.

PPO Garner Brass graduated from North Delta POST Academy in November. He was awarded a second place plaque for overall physical fitness. Congratulations, Garner.

PPOs Mark Miller, Reginald Chaptman, and **Jessica Southern** recently completed the 40 hour Defensive Tactics course taught by instructors from Tallulah and Monroe OJJ.

Thanksgiving Celebrated

Monroe OJJ celebrated Thanksgiving November 20 with a traditional holiday dinner of turkey, dressing, and all the fixings. It was delicious!!!!

Natchitoches Regional Office

Congratulations

PPOs Heather Christophe and Deanna Williams graduated from POST Academy at Alexandria Regional Police Academy in November.

Community Involvement

PPS Simon Sarpy, III and PPO3 Sederick Smith judged the Red River Junior High Science Fair in October.



Judges for RRJH Science Fair, from left, first row: Alvester Barfield, Dr. Allen Miles, Ardis Allen, Stewart Shaw, Vaughn Womack, Rosetta Wilson, Troy Murray. Back row: Mary Marston, Dr. Danny Hubbard, Edgar Gaddis, Peggy Horton, Becky Craig, Joe Black, Cedric Smith (not pictured is Whitney Allison).

PPS Simon Sarpy was a presenter, along with **Honorable Dee A. Hawthorne**, Judge for the Natchitoches 10th Judicial District Court, at the LSMSA (Louisiana School Math Science Arts) in November.

New Orleans/Jefferson Regional Office

Congratulations

PPO1 Kimberly Dickerson graduated the from Lake Charles Parish Sheriff's Office POST Academy.

Youth Participate in New Program

New Orleans Recreational Department (NORD) has started a new Wilderness Program and OJJ has been able to sign up several youth to participate. Youth will learn hard skills such as basic survival skills, hiking, backpacking, etc., which will lead to soft skills such as team work, leadership and problem solving, just to name a few. Youth will gain knowledge of local plants and animals, basics of recycling (reduce, reuse and recycle) and awareness of local environment issues.

Celebrations!

Orleans OJJ celebrated Thanksgiving with a covered dish luncheon. Employees contributed their favorite covered dishes, and staff ate until satisfied and then some.

Orleans OJJ celebrated Saints Day! Staff participated by wearing Saints shirts or black and and gold.



PPO1 Daniel Mingea III and PPO2 Austin Johnson.



Celebrating Saints Day are Admin. Sup. 1 Patrice Guy, Adm. Coordinator 3 Karen Ragan, PPO3 Vera Seals, PPO1 Daniel Mingea III, PPO1 Tanice Henley, Admin. Coordinator 3 Bridgette Dillon, Admin. Coordinator 2 Romona Julian, Admin. Supervisor Earnessa Moncriste, PPS Lydia Johnson, PPS Justine Aguiar, Admin. Coordinator 1 Jaleesa Williams and PPO2 Evalina Lestrick.

Youth Engage in Community Service Project



Youth from the Jefferson AMIKids participated in a community service project at the Sampson Playground in New Orleans. This playground was rebuilt after Hurricane Katrina with the assistance of OJJ's Make a Smile Project. Ten youth from Jefferson AMI assisted with cleaning the park under the leadership of New Orleans/Thibodaux Program Specialist Yezette White, Baton Rouge/Hammond Program Specialist Jacqueline Page and AMI Case Manager Trina Payne. "We had lots of fun making the park a fun place for kids in the community," said Jacqueline and Yezette.



Above and below: Jefferson AMIKids learn to give back through community service by cleaning up Sampson Park in New Orleans.



Shreveport Regional Office

Congratulations

PPO Sandy Ersoff was honored by being selected as Shreveport OJJ **Employee of the Month** for November. PPO Ersoff is a team player who is always eager to assist other officers.

PPOs Brandy Stratton, Fabrecia Roberson, and LaTonya Marshall graduated the Caddo Sheriff's Office POST Academy in November. All three did an excellent job at the academy. **PPO Fabrecia Roberson** was honored by being selected by the academy staff to receive the Leadership Award, and she was also selected to speak at the graduation ceremony. We are very proud of our officers!



Pictured are PPO LaTonya Marshall, PPO Brandy Startton, PPO Fabrecia Roberson, and PPS Rick Ladner.

Jessica Flores was awarded a PPO/J position in November. Jessica formerly served as a Transport Officer for Shreveport OJJ.

Regional Manager Kristi Martin participated in the Emerging Executives Training Institute at the November conference of the Association of Women Executives in Corrections held in New Orleans.

Thanksgiving Celebrated

Shreveport OJJ staff enjoyed Thanksgiving lunch together on November 17, 2009.

Swanson Center for Youth

"We Are Thankful!"

Swanson Holly D staff and the Staff Development Team celebrated the Thanksgiving holiday with a huge feast that consisted of a variety of barbecue meats, savory salads, delicious casseroles and desserts. The directors, staff and youth expressed their feelings by stating why they are so thankful during this holiday season.



The youth really enjoyed the celebration and thanked the staff for supporting them since they could not be with their families. Everyone is looking forward to all of the activities that are planned for the Christmas season.

SCY Holds Veterans Program

In November Swanson honored the military men and women who have served our country, and all who are still diligently serving to ensure our freedom. The program consisted of a scripture reading by **Christopher M.**, a prayer by **Donald Y.**, and "God Bless America" sung by **SSC4 Alma Holmes, SSC4. SSC3 Randy Williams** was the guest speaker, with closing remarks by **Director Carolyn Atkins**.

Tallulah Regional Office

Congratulations

PPO Janet Pierce graduated from the North Louisiana Criminal Justice Academy in Bossier City in November.

PPO Johnnie Bowman attended the Association of Women Executives in Corrections Conference in New Orleans in November.

Thanksgiving Celebration Held

Our office enjoyed a wonderful Thanksgiving feast with ham, dressing and all the sides. We have great cooks in our office!

Thibodaux Regional Office

Congratulations

Supervisor Andi Ford was selected **Employee of the Month** for November.

PPO3 Heidi Brown wed **Dustin McElroy** on October 30. The couple exchanged vows at Christ the Redeemer Catholic Church in Thibodaux with a reception following at the KC Home.

Probation and Parole Officers attended the AMIkids Family Day/Open House held at AMIkids Bayou Region Campus in November.



AMI KIDS Day From left, Gloria Hunter, Director of Education at AMIkids Bayou Region; PPO Allison Lirette; PPO JaNise Williams and PPO Lori Babin.

Thanksgiving Celebrated with a Meal and Donations

Thibodaux OJJ enjoyed a traditional Thanksgiving meal, and celebrated by helping others as well.

Thibodaux OJJ donated items for Thanksgiving baskets to be given to families on Probation and Parole Officer's caseloads.

We received donations from Wal-Mart, faith-based organizations, Dollar Tree, and T-OJJ employees. Probation Officers chose families

from their caseloads and turned them in to **Social Service Counselor Reshonn Saul**, who chaired and organized the event. The baskets were delivered by **SSC Saul**, **PPO Summer Ferriera**, **PPO JaNise Williams**, **PPO Allison Lirette**, **PPO Josh Becnel**, **PPO Keith Kotoski**, and **PPO Lori Babin**.



Regional Manager Angela T. Koenig, left, and Social Services Counselor Reshonn Saul with Thanksgiving baskets for client families.



A Thanksgiving Basket given to OJJ client families.

The Inside Scoop...of OJJ

The Inside Scoop...of OJJ is published monthly to communicate with and about OJJ staff in offices and facilities throughout the state, about agency activities, happenings and items of interest.

The Inside Scoop...of OJJ is produced by the Central Office with input from staff statewide.

...until next month

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